DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 284 CE 080 918

AUTHOR Guest, Graham
TITLE Lifelong Learning for the Global Networked Society.
PUB DATE 2000-04-09
NOTE 12p.; In: Cross-Roads of the New Millennium. Proceedings of the Technological Education and National Development (TEND) Conference (2nd, April 8-10, 2000, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates); see CE 080 883.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); *Adult Learning; Career Development; *Continuing Education; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Change; Educational Environment; Educational Needs; Educational Opportunities; Educational Technology; Educational Trends; Employment Patterns; Futures (of Society); Independent Study; Information Networks; *Information Technology; Job Training; *Lifelong Learning; Needs Assessment; Professional Continuing Education; *Professional Development; Student Centered Curriculum; Teacher Role; Teamwork; Trend Analysis; Work Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Global Economy; Learning Organizations

ABSTRACT

Professionals have normally become qualified through a period of formal education followed by a structured training program and continuing professional development. This traditional pattern is being replaced with a process of lifelong learning that, thanks to the development and application of a wide range of information and communication technologies, can be engaged in where, when, and how learners want. Moreover, the focus of learning is shifting from teachers and toward learners. These changes in the structure of learning are being accompanied by changes in the patterns of work. Increasingly, individuals are being expected to act self-employed but be team players, and the concept of learning is being applied not only to individuals but also to teams, groups, and organizations. The following are some of the things that fully effective adult learners are able to do: audit and assess what they already know and can do; formulate a career and learning development plan; integrate acknowledgment of their need for continuing personal development in private and professional realms into their learning; understand the qualities of different kinds of knowing and understanding, and of skills, and competence; and reflect on their knowledge and establish links between different kinds of knowledge. (Contains 12 references.) (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 447 284

TEND 2000

Crossroads of the New Millennium

Lifelong Learning For The Global Networked Society

Prepared and Presented

By

Mr. Graham Guest

Learning Consultant & Performance Coach

Graham Guest Consultancy

email : GrahamGuest@compuserve.com

Sunday 9 April, 2000

Workshop 2

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Billingsley

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 080 918

Abstract

Professionals have normally become qualified as a result of a period of formal education followed by, or integrated with, structured training. They have then followed this initial formation stage with continuing professional development. We are however beginning to see a breaking-down of this traditional pattern and its replacement with a process of lifelong learning undertaken in a variety of ways. The development and application of a wide range of information and communications technologies means that people can learn where, when, what and how they want. In addition the focus of learning is moving away from the teacher and towards the learner.

These changes in the structure of learning are being accompanied by changes in the patterns of work. No longer can a person be guaranteed a job for life and indeed the very concept of the 'job' is being called into question. The emphasis now is on flexibility and portfolio careers, where the individual develops a range of knowledge, skills and understanding to apply to new situations as they arise. This paper considers these changing patterns of work and learning and explores how they are forming the basis of a newly emerging global networked society.

Lifelong Learning for the Global Networked Society

> ***Just as the whole world is a school for the whole of the human race, from the beginning of time until the very end, so the whole of a person's life is a school for every one of us, from the cradle to the grave. It is no longer enough to say with Seneca: "no age is too late to begin learning." We must say: "every age is destined for learning, nor is a person given other goals in learning than in life itself."***
>
> *- Jan Comenius (1592-1670)*

Professionals have normally become qualified as a result of a period of formal education followed by, or integrated with, a structured training programme. They have then followed this initial formation stage with continuing professional development (CPD). We are however beginning to see a breaking-down of this traditional pattern and its replacement with a process of lifelong learning. Such learning is formal, non-formal and informal and undertaken in a variety of ways. The development and application of a wide range of information and communications technologies (ICT) means that people can learn where, when, what and how they want. In addition the focus of learning is moving away from the teacher and towards the learner.

These changes in the structure of learning are being accompanied by changes in the patterns of work. No longer can a person be guaranteed a job for life and indeed the very concept of the 'job' is being called into question. The emphasis now is on flexibility and portfolio careers, where the individual develops a range of knowledge, skills and understanding to apply to new situations as they arise. The convergence of learning and work is seen in the concept of the learning organisation and other forms of learning community such as the learning city. Societies, along with work and learning, are becoming more and more globalised, and individuals are increasingly regarding themselves as members of a number of inter-relating networks.

In this paper, which provides background for a TEND 2000 workshop, I consider the changing patterns of work and learning. During the workshop I will explore with the participants how these changing patterns are forming the basis of a newly emerging global networked society and discuss possible scenarios for the future.

SOME HISTORY

In the space of just a few centuries the world has witnessed huge transformations. In some parts of the world we have seen agricultural societies come and go and industrial societies, as well as service societies, taking their place. In other parts these three types of society continue to co-exist. But the most dramatic change has been the growth of the knowledge-based society, or learning society, which is truly global in nature and which has powerful implications for the ways in which we learn and work. For some people the learning society feels uncomfortable, undermining their sense of security, but to my mind it should be a source of optimism, bringing with it the possibility of enabling each one of us to develop our full potential and play our part as global citizens. Certainly we will go on tending the land, producing goods and supplying services, but our ideas of work and its purpose will be radically changed. "In a technologically advanced society where production of sufficient goods and services can be handled with ease, employment exists primarily for self-development, and is only secondarily concerned with the production of goods and services" (Harman and Hormann, 1990).

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To help us clarify such a vision let us first take a look at CPD. It can sometimes seem that there are as many definitions of CPD as there are professional institutions encouraging their members to participate in it. We all think we know what the words 'continuing', 'professional' and 'development' mean until we come to define them. When we do finally arrive at definitions the meanings of the words seem to change as we put them together to make the phrase. For example: Does 'continuing' mean throughout life or from the end of initial education and training? Is 'professional' solely job- or career-related, what happens if we do a number of different jobs and have a range of careers, and what actually distinguishes a professional from a non-professional? Does our 'development' have an end point during our life or is it an on-going process?

The Institute of Continuing Professional Development (ICPD) was launched in the United Kingdom in 1998 with the purpose of raising the effectiveness of professionals and professional organisations by the establishment of a set of standards relating to CPD. Here is one definition given by the Institute:

CPD is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and the development of personal qualities necessary for the education of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life.

This can at least be a working definition even if we accept, as the ICPD itself does, that it does not tell the whole story. From the perspective of professional bodies it is perhaps surprising still to hear debates about whether CPD should be optional or mandatory. Surely we need to practise CPD just in order to keep up with changes in our working lives let alone to keep ahead of them. One problem arises from the fact that we need to conceptualise CPD, thereby making it sound something special or separate from what we are doing anyway. Professional bodies can make CPD seem like a product that they are trying to force on their members.

This problem is compounded when the institutions try to quantify CPD in order to incorporate it into their membership requirements. How can it properly be measured by points or number of hours? Does attending a lecture contribute to our recognised CPD? What if we were asleep throughout? How about that book on memory techniques I read during the lunch-hour, the content of which I can't quite recall? If we are serious about measurement and assessment we need to find effective ways of measuring and assessing what has been learned but, as we all know, this is not easy.

TOWARDS LIFELONG LEARNING

I believe it helps to switch the focus from a concept having its origins in the world of professional membership to one relating more to all aspects of our life: lifelong learning. Harman and Hormann again: "Finally, the old concept of education as job preparation is totally unsatisfactory from both the standpoints of the individual and society. For a host of reasons, lifelong learning is the only kind of education that makes sense. Thus, the workplace can also be considered as a learning place." So the concept of lifelong learning seems to have a clearer, more uncompromising meaning, certainly for the times in which we now live, and it relates to our personal as well as our professional development.

We cannot be certain of a job for life, but what is certain is that we will need to be prepared for job changes and for utilising new skills and knowledge at increasingly frequent intervals. More than that, the very nature of work and what it means to be employed is changing. Looking at developments in the Western world, the quantum physicist, David Bohm (quoted in Kofman and Senge, 1995), says, "Starting with the agricultural revolution, and continuing through the industrial revolution, increasing fragmentation in the social order has produced a progressive fragmentation of our thought." This fragmented way of thinking - breaking things down into their component parts - allowed Henry Ford, using Frederick Taylor's theories, to deconstruct work processes and produce more cars more economically. The learning society, by contrast, is based on the primacy of the whole, not the parts. We see this in new organisational structures based on a systems approach where, for example, job-specific hierarchies give way to multi-functional teams or networks and where work is more than simply a way of earning. "The defining characteristic of a system is that it *cannot* be understood as a function of its isolated components" (Kofman and Senge, 1995).

THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

New structures of work, learning and thought are needed to cope with a world, which is becoming increasingly chaotic and unpredictable. Consider just some of the ways in which the world is changing. We can now insert a piece of plastic into a hole in the wall almost anywhere in the world and get money from our bank account. Soon we will be able to top up our electronic purse with money from our account via our personal computer. Of course our bank might actually be a supermarket, where in the near future we will be able to buy gas and electricity using our smart card, which will also register the credits in our learning account.

So the supermarket is no longer just a supermarket and our money is no longer recognisable as money. Also it seems unlikely that individuals will continue to have single jobs or roles. Statements such as I am an engineer, I am a welder, I am a banker, I am an architect will, I predict, seem very antiquated before too long. As Alan Briskin (1998) points out, "Role is a mental construct that is fluid and constantly changing because the world around us is also dynamic and constantly changing." Multi-skilling is one of the buzzwords. Multi-employers might be another, but why stop there, when we can each be our own employer? Denis

Waitley (1995) says, "From the day you read this, I urge you to live by another paradoxical proverb: ***You must act self-employed, but be a team player.***

What this means is that you're your own chief executive officer. Start thinking of yourself as a service company with a single employee." William Bridges (1997) pursues this idea when he says, "...you need to understand why traditional jobs no longer fit this world and why companies are abandoning them." He quotes Robert Schaen, the former controller of the telephone company, Ameritech: "The days of the mammoth corporations are coming to an end. People are going to have to create their own lives, their own careers and their own successes. Some people may go kicking and screaming into the New World, but there is only one message there: You're now in business for yourself." That certainly gets over the problem of whether CPD, or lifelong learning, is optional or mandatory. The pessimist will say it is about struggle and survival, but for the optimist it is about taking control of our own development and positively influencing our work and the society of which we are a part.

INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Already the concept of learning is being applied not only to individuals, but also to teams, groups and organisations. But how can an organisation learn? We can appreciate this if we avoid seeing the organisation as simply the sum total of the individuals it comprises. Consider an orchestra or a regiment. We still talk about the music played by the orchestra and the battles won and lost by the regiment in the past, even though all the original members of the entity have gone. Arie de Geus (1997), formerly with Royal Dutch/Shell, has written about what he calls the living company. He says, "...living entities...are the only entities which can learn" and "Companies can learn *because* they are living beings."

We will need to change our negative attitudes to learning. For many people these have been shaped by various factors: social, political and psychological. School is something we are forced to attend and whilst there we have knowledge poured into us by a teacher who, by definition, knows more than we do. Learning therefore has been seen as a passive activity and one to be avoided if possible. We are taught, educated and trained. We study something to get a qualification to match a job. We have some initial training and when we need some updating we go, or rather are sent, on a course.

It all sounds quite manipulative and yet back in 1971 Ivan Illich was saying that learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. In *Deschooling Society* he had some perceptive and radical things to say about institutional learning, for example, "People who submit to the standard of others for the measure of their own personal growth soon apply the same ruler to themselves. They no longer have to be put in their place, but put themselves into their assigned slots, squeeze themselves into the niche which they have been taught to seek, and, in the very process, put their fellows into their places, too, until everybody and everything fits."

Peter Vaill (1996) pursues this theme. He says, "...institutional learning is likely to be answer oriented...", "Other institutional learning features of training programs are that program participants are assumed to be *qualified* to be there..." and "Behind these ideas lies the assumption that *learning is cumulative*..." Some of our irrational attitudes to education, training and learning can be seen daily in job advertisements. Typically employers ask for holders of specific qualifications: a degree, a diploma, and so on, regardless of the fact that the qualification might have been gained ten or more years ago. Even back in 1985 John Naisbitt was pointing out in *Megatrends* that scientific and technical information was increasing by 13% per year, which means doubling every 5.5 years.

Professional bodies will be seen to have made real progress with their CPD or lifelong learning policies when advertisements appear asking for people whose learning is up to date and related to the work they will be doing today and in the future. Donald Schön (1987) asks, "Can the prevailing concepts of professional education ever yield a curriculum adequate to the complex, unstable, uncertain, and conflictual worlds of practice?" For Schön "...professional artistry is understood in terms of reflection-in-action, and it plays a central role in the description of professional competence", whilst Longworth and Davies (1996) believe, "Lifelong learning challenges the traditional university role as a repository of the intellectual capital of a nation and as a centre for research and excellence only."

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR THE ENGINEER

For one profession's approach to lifelong learning we can turn to the European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI). SEFI has issued a discussion document (Padfield *et al.*, 1998) with the intention of stimulating debate on professional education and lifelong learning for engineers. The SEFI working group on lifelong learning and continuing education in engineering says, "It is one of the primary understandings of lifelong learning that an individual must possess certain "lifelong learning skills". A fully effective "adult learner" is able, fluently and without external direction, to:

- audit and assess what they already know and can do
- work out, at a level of detail that will differ from individual to individual, a career and a learning development plan
- integrate, into their learning, acknowledgement of their need for continuing *personal* development in the private as well as the professional realms
- understand the qualities of different kinds of knowing, of understanding, and of skills and competence; how the different kinds of knowledge inter-relate and reinforce each other
- reflect upon their knowledge, establishing links between different kinds of knowledge, and formulating relevant theoretical constructs to explain it
- conduct research into elements of professional knowledge, practice and competence that lie within the context of their work, in pursuit of solutions to "problems of the day", personal professional development, and (more generally) the development of their profession."

A POSSIBLE FUTURE

Just as the traditional roles of universities and colleges are being questioned, so the learning future that I envisage will present strong challenges to professional institutions. Such institutions will, I believe, need carefully and critically to examine their roles both as qualifying bodies and as learned societies. On what basis are they conferring their qualifications and titles and should they move away from the role of learned societies, primarily serving their members, to become learning organisations with a much wider range of stakeholders?

The new worlds of work and learning offer each of us positive challenges to co-operate with others to reach beyond the old paradigms of command and control. This paper deliberately raises more questions than it answers and, as a way of offering more food for thought and discussion at the workshop, I end by presenting the following as a possible scenario for the future.

- All learning will be lifelong learning. It will be our own individual responsibility, undertaken with help, support and guidance from our coaches, mentors, colleagues and other fellow members of the networks to which we belong.
- In the new learning society we will be neither dependent nor independent, but interdependent, pursuing our learning and development in all manner of ways, acquiring new skills and knowledge as we need and want them.
- Our learning will be formal and informal and the artificial distinction between professional and personal development will disappear.
- We will be skilled at learning how to learn, accessing new information and seeking out new sources of knowledge, using information and communications technologies (ICT) where appropriate.
- The traditional university and college will be subsumed into a global virtual learning network including large companies as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Our learning and development will be demonstrated not in terms of qualifications but by means of personal portfolios, open and accessible on the internet.
- The 'job', as we now understand it, will disappear and our work will have new meaning, being seen as a source of creativity and personal fulfilment.
- We will be members of increasingly inter-related global networks for work, learning and development.
- Lifelong learning will be the key to survival and prosperity in the new knowledge-based economy.

REFERENCES

- Bridges, W., (1997). *Creating You & Co: Be the Boss of your own Career.* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Briskin, A., (1998). *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- de Geus, A., (1997). *The Living Company: Growth, Learning and Longevity in Business.* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Harman, W. and Hormann, J., (1990). *Creative Work: The Constructive Role of Business in a Transforming Society.* Indianapolis: Knowledge Systems, Inc.
- Illich, I., (1971). *Deschooling Society.* New York: Harper and Row.
- Kofman, F. and Senge, P. M., (1995). "Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organisations" in Chawla, S. and Renesch, J. (eds), *Learning Organisations: Developing Cultures for Tomorrow's Workplace.* Portland: Productivity Press.
- Longworth, N. and Davies, W. K., (1996). *Lifelong Learning.* London: Kogan Page.
- Naisbitt, J., (1985). "Megatrends". Paris: *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.*
- Padfield, C. *et al.*, (1998). "Lifelong Learning in Engineering Education: A Call to Action". *SEFI Document No. 20.* Brussels: European Society for Engineering Education.
- Schön, D. A., (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Vaill, P. B., (1996). *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Waitley, D., (1995). *Empires of the Mind: Lessons to Lead and Succeed in a Knowledge-Based World.* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.